

VZCZCXYZ0005  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHNT #1487 2590715  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 160715Z SEP 09  
FM AMEMBASSY TASHKENT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1321

UNCLAS TASHKENT 001487

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PBTS](#) [KNNP](#) [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [KSTC](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN EAGER TO INCREASE BORDER SECURITY COOPERATION

1. (SBU) Summary: GOU Customs and Border Security Officials seemed eager to get down to business during a meeting with Regional Export Control and Border Security (EXBS) Advisor and poloff. Uzbek officials recalled successful joint projects which took place in 2001 and expressed their desire to once again work closely with the USG in all areas of border security-including counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and nuclear nonproliferation. The discussion identified current areas of weakness in Uzbek border security and areas of future cooperation. EXBS Advisor and poloff accepted the invitation to take the next step in improving relations by visiting border checkpoints and the Uzbek Institute of Nuclear Physics. End Summary.

#### SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION-PAST AND FUTURE

-----

2. (SBU) Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Committee of Uzbekistan Rustam Mansurov kicked off the September 10 meeting by recalling the positive history of cooperation between the GOU and the USG in the area of border security. Mansurov mentioned the donation of equipment worth over USD 2 million, the realization of 25 seminars which were attended by 190 GOU employees, and the visits of 50 GOU officers to the United States. These projects strengthened Uzbekistan's borders, built up the infrastructure of the customs agency, and helped the GOU to fight against the smuggling of radioactive and narcotic contraband. Mansurov said that the GOU continues to develop its customs and border security infrastructure, and would welcome assistance from the USG in making needed changes and updates.

#### WEAK SPOTS IN UZBEK BORDER SECURITY

-----

3. (SBU) Uzbek officials were fairly frank in their comments about the weaknesses of Uzbek border security. Current problems include a lack of equipment in certain regional airports and border checkpoints and a constant need for training and retraining of personnel. Vitaliy Petrenko, the leading researcher at the Uzbek Institute of Nuclear Physics, proudly spoke of an interconnected system which allows for the detection of radioactive materials in 28 of Uzbekistan's border checkpoints, but pointed out that there are 212 checkpoints total. The vast majority of border checkpoints are not equipped to detect radiation, which leaves a huge hole in border security for the purposes of nonproliferation.

#### WHAT TO DO NEXT

-----

4. (SBU) GOU officials expressed their hope that this meeting would be a "foundation" for a constructive working relationship focused on issues of mutual concern, such as counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and nuclear nonproliferation. Regional EXBS Advisor hopes to define a specific framework for future

cooperation. GOU officials welcomed the idea of establishing a relationship between the Uzbek Customs Academy and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Mansurov hopes that the GOU and the USG can work together to provide training to Uzbek personnel both through local workshops and through visits to the United States. He also invited EXBS Advisor and poloff to visit customs and border security facilities throughout the country, including airports, border checkpoints, and the Institute of Nuclear Physics.

COMMENT

-----

¶5. (SBU) After a period of little contact between the GOU and the USG on issues of border security, it seems that the conditions are right to ramp up cooperation again. It is in our best interest to take full advantage of the GOU's willingness to work with EXBS. The GOU's current inclination towards cooperation could be an opening to establish a permanent or Regional EXBS advisor in Tashkent.

NORLAND